

Case 2737

***Brahmaea* Walker, 1855 (Insecta, Lepidoptera): proposed confirmation of *Bombyx certhia* Fabricius, 1793 as the type species**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to confirm that the nominal type species of the moth genus *Brahmaea* Walker, 1855 is *Bombyx certhia* Fabricius, 1793. Walker misidentified this species when describing *Brahmaea*, but the genus has been interpreted in the sense of *B. certhia* being the type.

1. The generic name *Brahmaea* Walker (1855 [November 10], p. 1200) was established in a key to genera; it is the type genus of BRAHMAEIDAE Swinhoe (1892, p. 253). There were no included nominal species but Walker (1855 [December 8], p. 1316) subsequently included two species, the first one cited being *Bombyx certhia* Fabricius (1793, p. 412). Butler (1880, p. 188) showed that Walker had misidentified the specimens and for *Brahmaea certhia* (Fabricius) sensu Walker (1855) he established the name *Brahmaea conchifera* Butler, 1880. *B. conchifera* is a junior subjective synonym of *Bombyx wallichii* Gray (1831, p. 39).

2. The first designation of type species for *Brahmaea* Walker, 1855 was by Kirby (1892, p. 724) who cited *B. conchifera* Butler, 1880 and placed '*B. Certhia*, Walk. l[oc]. c[it]. p. 1316 n. 1 (1855)' in its synonymy. This designation is invalid since *B. conchifera* was not an originally included nominal species and '*B. certhia* Walker' is a misidentification.

3. Hampson ([1893], p. 29) designated '*B. certhia* Fabr., from China' as type species; this is the true *B. certhia* Fabricius, 1793. An investigation in 1988 by Miss P. Gilbert in the library of The Natural History Museum, London, revealed that Hampson's book was not received by the library before 5 April 1893, and 1893 may be taken as the year of publication.

4. Until 1930, *B. certhia* and *B. wallichii* (i.e. *B. conchifera*) were included in *Brahmaea*, without subgenera. Then *Brahmophthalma* Mell (1930, p. 346) (type species *Bombyx wallichii* Gray, 1831, by designation by Bryk (1949, p. 20)), was established to denote a subgenus of *Brahmaea*. Mell included the true *certhia* Fabricius in *Brahmaea* (*Brahmaea*).

5. Since 1930, virtually all authors followed Mell's concept that the type species of *Brahmaea* was the true *certhia* Fabricius, i.e. they have followed Hampson's [1893] designation (para. 3). Bryk (1949, pp. 20–26) was aware of the misidentification of the

type species of *Brahmaea*, but expressly followed Mell's concept to retain stability. Bryk gave *Brahmophthalma* Mell full generic status and established two more genera, *Brahmaeops* and *Brahmidia*, for species included in *Brahmophthalma* Mell. This act of splitting was accepted by Sauter (1967, pp. 125–129) when describing a new genus for the only European species of the family, and some of the most recent authors (e.g. Barlow, 1982) followed this. In contrast, Inoue et al. (1982) synonymized Mell's and Bryk's genera with *Brahmaea* Walker, but this does not, in our opinion, reflect the relationships within the group sufficiently.

6. Fletcher & Nye (1982, p. 25) cited *B. conchifera* as the type species of *Brahmaea* Walker, 1855, together with the relevant bibliographic information concerning the misidentification of *certhia* by Walker. Fletcher & Nye stated that this case of a misidentified type-species should be referred to the Commission.

7. Sauter (1987, pp. 262–271), in the only systematic paper on the BRAHMAEIDAE published since Fletcher & Nye (1982), followed the generic concepts of Mell and of Bryk by accepting the true *certhia* Fabricius as type species of *Brahmaea*. Sauter was aware of the problems and again wanted to retain stability of use. In a forthcoming revision of the family by Nässig it is intended to follow Mell's concept (see also Nässig & Paukstadt, 1990).

8. In order to obtain stability in the usage of the nominal genus *Brahmaea*, and following Article 70b of the Code, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is asked:

- (1) to confirm the designation by Hampson ([1893]) of *Bombyx certhia* Fabricius, 1793, as the type species of *Brahmaea* Walker, 1855;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Brahmaea* Walker, 1855 (gender: feminine), type species by designation by Hampson ([1893]) *Bombyx certhia* Fabricius, 1793 as confirmed in (1) above;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *certhia* Fabricius, 1793, as published in the binomen *Bombyx certhia* (specific name of the type species of *Brahmaea* Walker, 1855).

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